

Utilization of SAFER Grant Firefighters Overview

Background:

The Spokane Fire Department submitted a grant application for the FY 2013 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant during the late summer of 2013 for a total of 12 firefighter positions to be deployed as follows:

- Eight Firefighters to staff four Alternative Response Units (ARU) seven days per week, ten-hours per day.
- Four Firefighters to restore firefighting capability at Fire Station 9

After initial notification that our SAFER grant application was not accepted, we were advised months later that the application was reconsidered. On Friday, September 26, 2014, the City received official notification that the grant had been approved.

In the period between the grant application and the grant approval, the City Council approved the 2014 budget with the addition of four firefighter positions to restore firefighting capabilities at Fire Station 9 (to bring the total to three personnel per shift). As a result of this action, the four firefighter positions requested in the SAFER Grant for the same purpose could not be approved due to the existence of supplanting. DHS/FEMA did however; indicate their willingness to allow the four positions to be utilized in other ways that improved staffing (with DHS/FEMA's advanced approval).

The City must now officially accept the grant award. The initial acceptance period was within 30-days of award notification, however DHS/FEMA has indicated they will extend that period to a total of-60 days which means acceptance must occur by November 25th.

Deployment Recommendation of SAFER Firefighter Positions:

Since the primary SAFER grant application centered on ARU's, and due to the success of the ARU program during the 2013/2014 trial, it is necessary that the ARU program focus continue. It is believed that other positions should be used to provide needed service to Southwest Spokane (i.e. Qualchan Area).

1. It is recommended that a total of six positions be utilized to staff ARU's. Each ARU would work four, 10-hour days per week. On four days during the week there would be four ARU's in service and two ARU's would be staffed four days per week 10 hours per day to cover the balance of the week.
2. It is recommended that a total of six positions be utilized to staff a two-person unit (eight total personnel needed to cover four shifts 24/7/365) in the Southwest portion of Spokane. The strategic purpose is to improve response times to a portion the City that does not have a City Fire Station within five road miles as required by Washington Survey and Rating and the SFD Standard of Coverage. In addition to these six positions, two additional positions would be funded from FD overtime dollars.

Details of Deployment recommendation: (To be implemented around May 2015 after recruit graduation)

1. ARU's –

- a. Schedule – Location - Staffing. (see attached map)
 - i. Four ARU's will be placed in service four days a week, ten hours a day. They will be dynamically deployed, but initially located at Stations 1, 4, 13 and 18 based on call volume and coverage need. Note: These station areas were specifically selected to provide coverage to the areas where most non-life threatening EMS incidents have been occurring.

- ii. Two ARU's will be placed in service on opposing four days (to achieve seven day-a-week coverage), and be in-service ten hours a day. They will be initially located at Stations 1 and 13.
- iii. Each ARU will be staffed with one person. It is desired to staff as many ARU's as possible with a Paramedic except one ARU will be BLS (most likely located at Station 1 and designated as Squad 1-2).
- iv. Wednesdays will be an overlap day that will allow for mandated training and compliance activities.
- v. All ARU's would not be backfilled (that would create a larger overtime expense) if the assigned employee is off-duty (e.g. sick, vacation, etc.). It is anticipated that there would be least one ARU in service each day.

2. Southwest Spokane Coverage

a. Schedule – Location – Staffing

- i. One, two-person company will be placed in service seven days-a-week, 365 days per year, in a temporary fire station located in Southwest Spokane (location to be decided). This will require two persons per shift for each of the four shifts (2 x 4 = 8).
- ii. The two person company will consist of an officer and a driver (FEO) assigned on each shift. One of the officers assigned to this station will be a Captain. This will require a budget adjustment in the spring of 2015 for the upgrade of existing positions to add one captain position, three Lieutenants and four FEO's. SAFER funds cannot pay for the cost of officer positions so the cost of these upgrades for these positions, estimated to be approximately \$110,500 per year, would have to be covered.
- iii. In order to ensure that the company is within five road miles of all SW parts of the City, a facility that can serve as a temporary station would need to be sought in the general area from Thorpe and Highway 195 to the south city limits. It would be more advantageous to locate the temporary station in the northern most portion of this area so the unit would be closer to and could respond to some of the calls that occur in Station 4's current response area just south of Interstate 90, in addition to covering incidents in the southern most part of the area.
 - 1. It is anticipated that a current residential structure with an oversize garage would have to be purchased or leased for this temporary fire station.
 - 2. Stakeholders seem amenable to a temporary operating quarters solution based on the positive experiences utilizing the modular home concept for Station 6.
- iv. In order to receive credit towards lower insurance ratings, the apparatus used by this company would need to have a minimum of a 750 gpm pump and 300 gallon water tank.
- v. It is desired to have at least one paramedic per shift among those staffed at this Southwest station to provide Advanced Life Support first response medical plan. This desired level of assignment will be dependent on the availability of paramedics within the Fire Department.
- vi. On shifts in which FD daily staffing is plus, a third person could be assigned to the Southwest station.

Other Factors:

- The SAFER Grant period will officially start on 12-21-2014 and span a two-year period of time. The City can request a grant extension for up to six months; but cannot do so until approximately two months before the end of the grant period.

- There can be no layoffs of firefighters during the grant period. However, positions can be lost through attrition during the grant period but must be filled in a reasonable time frame (generally up to 6 months).
- Because new firefighters will need to be hired to fill these SAFER positions and recruit classes last for approximately 14 weeks, personnel will not be available for deployment to the field until around May of 2015.
- SAFER only pays personnel cost and will not pay for any equipment. The City will need to fund firefighting gear including personal protective equipment (PPE) at approximately \$3500/ set for a total of approximately \$42,000.
- While the City has utilized a two-person fire company in the past (approximately 26 years ago), to do so today will require discussions with Local 29. The concepts outlined above have been discussed with Local 29 and they have indicated that they would support the plan with conditions. Those conditions include:
 - An agreement with the city that the two person company will be temporary in nature with the expectation that it will become a permanent three person fire company in the future. Local 29 will seek a drop dead date by which this permanent three person fire company will become operational. They are willing to discuss the inclusion of a service demand provision (number of calls for service) in the agreement as a trigger with the understanding that it may shorten the length of time to the drop dead date.
- At the end of the SAFER Grant period the city will have to have a plan to fund the 12 firefighter positions for the future or transition those positions out of the fire department operation.
 - Depending on federal funding and future SAFER guidelines, there may be a possibility of applying to extending these SAFER positions.
- If the City does implement a two person interim company to serve SW Spokane and agrees to the transition of a permanent three person company, it will likely require new funding to the fire department for the 12 personnel necessary to staff a permanent SW station.

Summary:

With the SAFER Grant application for twelve firefighters approved by FEMA for a two year period, it provides the City with an opportunity to improve service delivery and daily staffing.

While there are ramifications that will occur with the acceptance of the Grant, it appears that the benefits of the grant are advantageous and will improve the protection of citizens and firefighters through an overall enhancement to the existing deployment system. Nevertheless, careful consideration must be given to the long-term budgeting impact if the decision is made to place a temporary two-person fire company in SW Spokane.

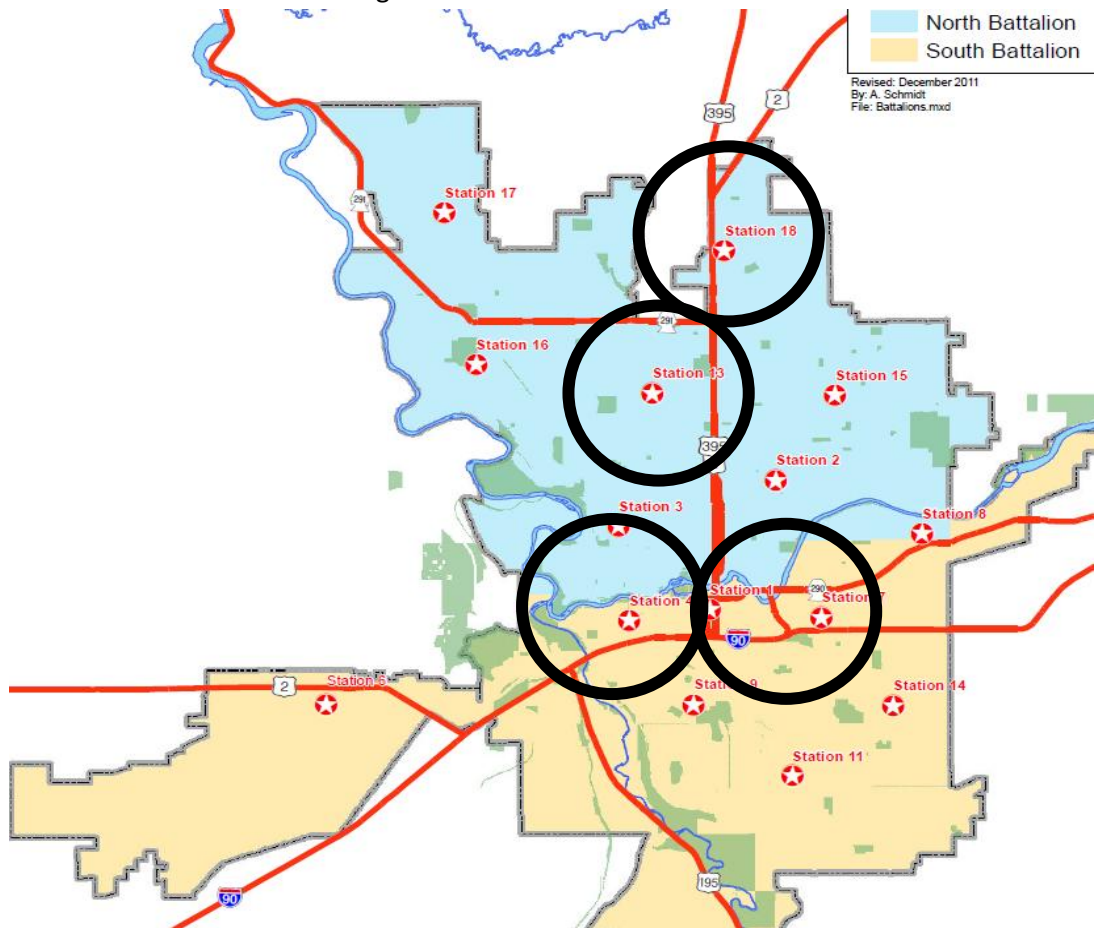
Cost impacts to City if Grant is Accepted:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • PPE for twelve FF (\$3500/set x 12 sets) | \$ 42,000 Onetime expense |
| • Officers for SW fire stations | \$110,500 Annual expense |

Support Information

Busiest response areas for Non-Life Threatening Calls in order of call volume based on 2013 data:

- Station 1
- Station 13
- Station 4
- Station 18
- Station 3
- Station 11
- Station 15



Statistical Information Regarding ARU (including Sq 1-2) - June 17th – October 3rd 2014

SSQ1-2 – Since June 17th – worked 64 days – 659 calls = 10.3/ shift

ARU 2 – Since June 17th – worked 65 days – 601 calls = 9.2/ shift

ARU 4 – Since June 17th – worked 63 days – 660 calls = 10.5/ shift

- 3 ARU's have responded to ~ 1,920 incidents since June 17th

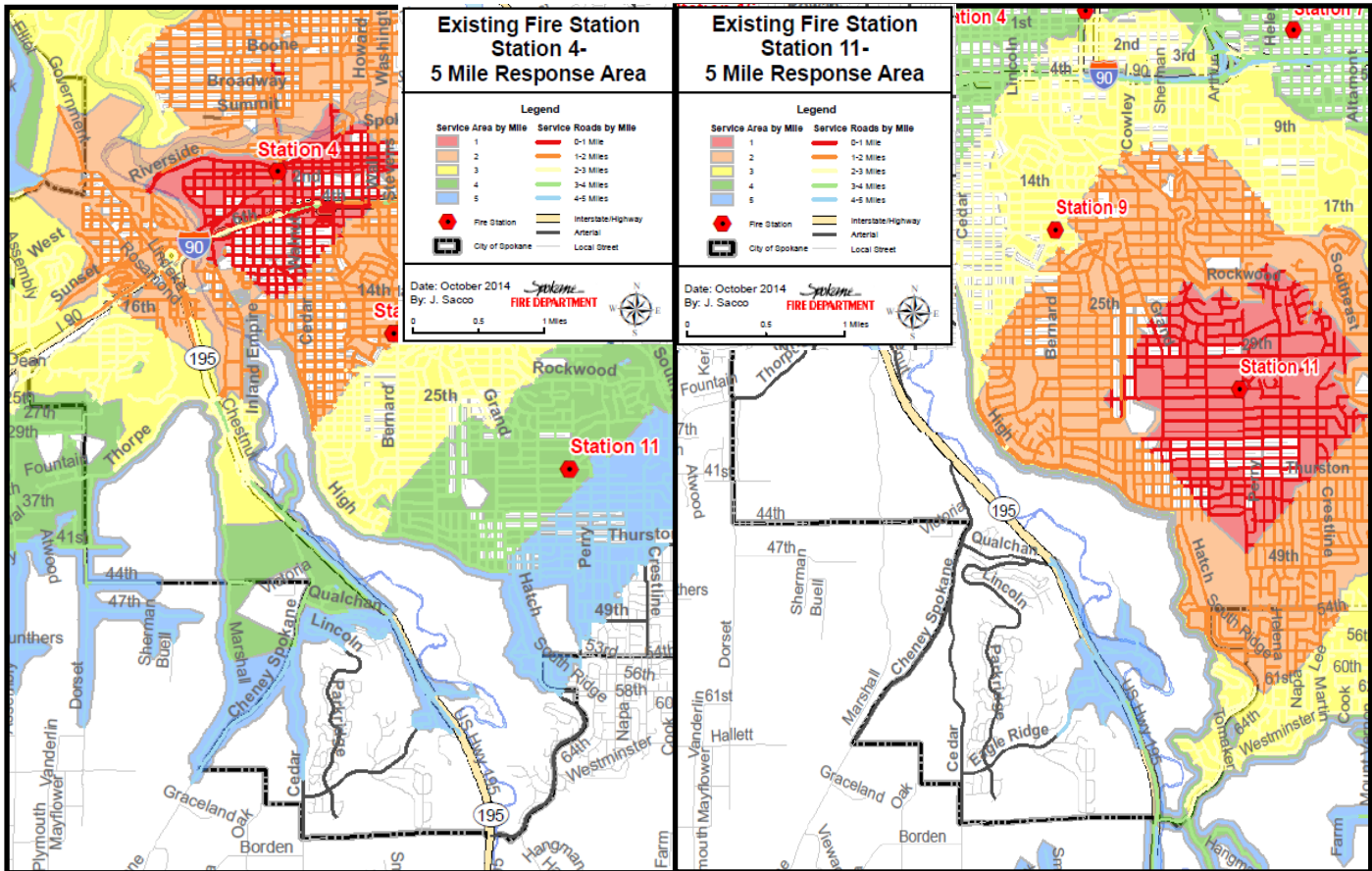
Based on data since Mid June

- Across the 3 Units – ARU's are Responding to Ave of 30/ calls/ shift – each day - 4 days/ week
- 2013 SFD Responded to Ave of 90.8 calls/ day
- ARU's Responding to ~33% of average daily call volume (ADCV) on the days they are in service
 - Handling ~80% of calls Alone (~ 26/ shift = ~ 28.7% of ADCV)
- 87.2% of ARU Responses are EMS (73.6% Non Life Threatening; 13.6% Life Threatening)
- 10.7% Auto/ Auto;
- 1.5% Service Calls;
- .6% Fire Calls
- 2013 SFD Responded to 15,305 Non-Life Threatening (NLT) calls
- SFD Averages ~ 41.9 NLT calls/ day
- ARU's handling ~ 22.1 NLT/calls/ day
- ARU's handling ~ 52.7% of total NLT calls on the days they work
 - ARU's are handling ~30% of all NLT calls responded to by SFD

Service to SW Spokane

The Goal is to locate a station so the entire SW portion of the City is within 5 road miles of a fire station and at a location that can cover the largest number of incidents without traveling great distances.

Currently Stations 4 (W. Riverside at entrance to Browne's Addition) and 11 (32nd & Perry) are not within 5 road miles of all portions of SW Spokane. See Maps below showing service coverage by road mile. Each road mile of coverage is represented by a different color. Note: Areas not covered by a color are beyond 5 road miles of a station.



Estimated Incident Call Volumes to SW Spokane – South of Thorpe Road

<u>Qualchan/ I95 Incidents -</u>		
<u>Thorpe Road to City Limits</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
Full Response Structure Fires	3	0
Working Structure Fires	0	1
Single Company Structure Fire	8	5
Brush Fire	1	1
Vehicle Fire	0	2
Alarm System	6	9
Haz Mat Investigation	0	2
Non Life Threatening Medical Calls		
31 A (Non emergency responses)	6	11
31 B (Most are Non emergency responses)	34	35
Life Threatening Medical Calls		
31 C (1st level)	19	21
31 D (2nd level)	28	26
31 E (3rd level)	1	0
Auto Extrication	1	0
Auto Accident	18	10
Service Call	3	1
Total Calls	128	124

Based on Estimated Call Volume South of Thorpe Road, it would be most advantageous to locate a station so it could cover incidents both south and north of Thorpe Road and still accomplish the 5 road mile coverage. There are limited streets that access Highway 195 and provide relatively quick access to the southern most parts of the City.

The maps below of potential temporary station locations show 5 mile coverage areas. As can be seen, a station location as far north as 16th Avenue, cannot cover all of SW Spokane within 5 road miles and a station located at Thorpe Road can cover all areas within 5 road miles. Therefore it would be necessary to locate a temporary station so all areas of the City are within 5 road miles.

